RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 13 NO. 13
JULY 1983
ISSUE NO. 271

80¢

(R) 7-26-83

Readers Rate The Trains

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LETTERS

Because I will be visiting relatives in Kansas City this summer, I have been investigating my travel options. I don't care for long distance driving and intensely dislike bus travel. So I have a choice of riding Amtrak from Philadelphia to Kansas City via Chicago or flying on a major airline.

Traveling Amtrak, the cheapest fare is the $225 "All Aboard America" coach rate. But rail coach travel is not especially appealing to me; I value my privacy and comfort on such long journeys. If I want to take the train, I will have to pay the sleeping car surcharge. Unfortunately, the "All Aboard America" rate does not apply to sleeping car travel in July when I will be traveling. Amtrak says I must pay regular coach fare--in this case $326 round trip--plus the accommodation charge. Riding Amtrak from Philadelphia to Kansas City in "economy" sleepers (slumbercoach Philadelphia-Chicago, economy bedroom Chicago-Kansas City) the total fare comes to $465 round trip. "First class" travel (roomette to Chicago, deluxe bedroom, the only Superliner accommodation other than the handicapped room with a private toilet and sink, to Kansas City) is a whopping $822 round trip. Of course these rates do not include the cost of Amtrak's airline-style meals which really add up when you consider the trip time involved.

Now compare this with TWA's one-way Philadelphia-Kansas City fare of $135 in effect during the month of July. Tho the airline does not require a round trip purchase to qualify for the $135 rate, if I were to buy a round trip air ticket it would be a reasonable $270, a mere $45 over Amtrak's cheapest ticket, the "All Aboard America" coach fare. Not only is the round trip airline fare comparable to Amtrak's cheapest coach excursion ticket, the airfare is $552 cheaper than Amtrak's first class sleeper rate and $195 less than the economy class sleeper.

Given these facts, just who is going to choose rail over air? I'm a railfan and even I won't ride the train this summer. I'd love to hear from Amtrak's marketing department.

Lawrence Barnes
Rosemont, Pennsylvania

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ON THE COVER

Amtrak's Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City ANN RUTLEDGE, train 303, in a classic Midwestern scene photographed by Jack Ferry on May 15. The train is running at speed near Towanda, Illinois on Illinois Central Gulf rails as it meets a freight led by Illinois Central-lettered diesels, with engine 9519 leading.

If Amtrak were to develop and advertise an "Executive Class" service on a few overnight trains offering SUPERIOR amenities including REAL food in a real dining car and a first-class only lounge that looked more like a lounge in a top-grade hotel than a McDonald's restaurant, the rail corporation might be able to lure a reasonable number of business travelers away from the airlines. But I don't think that Amtrak believes in itself enough even to try.

Leonard von Arx
Alexandria, Virginia

We have traveled by train in the U.S., Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland and the Orient--and the Reno, Nevada depot is undoubtedly the most disgraceful, dirty one we have ever seen. If Amtrak pays Southern Pacific for the use of this depot, they should insist on its being kept clean. The restrooms are a menace! The floors are filthy! The windows hardly admit daylight! The station platform was littered with papers and beer bottles.

Our Amtrak trip (Denver-West Coast roundtrip) was pleasant; the equipment was excellent; the train crew courteous and helpful.

Randall Buckley
Superior, Wisconsin

RTN continues to be informative, and some of your letters are quite amusing. You had a letter in #270 from Cliff Vickery of Everett WA concerning Amtrak dining cars. The way he eats on Amtrak trains makes me suggest he make his future trips by Greyhound!

Jerry Angier
South Portland, Maine

In RTN 270, George Blishak is correct in saying that it takes the whole day to travel across our fourth largest state by train. However, he is incorrect as he is referring to the SOUTHWEST LIMITED across New Mexico. But it does take each EMPIRE BUILDER more than 12 hours to cross Montana, which really is the fourth largest state. New Mexico is number 5.

Mark W. Meyer
Havre, Montana

I cannot believe that many people were delayed and that Amtrak received complaints because the speedometer did not work on the engine of train 20 at Slidell LA on May 14 (see RTN 268, page 19). What happened to the engineer's pocket watch? And to the mile posts? This is so ridiculous it is beyond my understanding. I could understand if the engine died, but this is something else. The Southern, like most railroads, are under contract to maintain Amtrak equipment, and this whole incident is their fault. Amtrak should not be charged for any of this.

J. Farley Finkley
Brandon, Florida

Readers Rate The Trains

1——2——3——4——5——6——7——8——9

Extremely poor — Average, acceptable — Extremely good

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS	A. OVERALL RATING	B. OPERATING CREW	C. DINING CREW	D. LOUNGE CREW	E. FOOD QUALITY	F. CAR CONDITION (MECHANICAL)	G. CAR CLEANLINESS	H. TRACK CONDITION	I. SCHEDULING	J. STATION CONDITION	K. TYPE OF CARS (APPROPRIATE?)	RANK IN SURVEY
RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR (DRGW)	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.0	8.1	6.7	7.9	1
LAKE SHORE LIMITED	7.8	7.2	6.3	5.5	6.8	8.2	8.2	7.3	7.5	6.0	8.2	2
EMPIRE BUILDER	7.4	6.5	6.8	7.0	6.6	8.4	8.5	5.2	7.5	6.5	7.8	3
COLONIAL	7.2	7.2	-	6.0	6.5	8.0	7.5	8.2	6.8	7.2	7.5	4
BROADWAY LIMITED	7.2	7.0	6.8	7.5	6.4	7.8	7.8	5.6	7.2	5.6	8.1	5
SILVER METEOR	7.2	7.2	8.2	7.2	7.8	5.7	5.8	6.3	7.7	6.8	7.5	6
CRESCENT	6.9	7.3	6.3	5.5	7.0	6.8	5.6	7.7	7.6	6.6	7.1	7
MONTREALER	6.9	7.0	6.5	6.7	4.5	7.0	6.8	6.5	7.0	5.8	6.2	8
PIONEER	6.9	6.9	6.2	6.6	4.6	8.4	8.0	7.7	8.2	8.1	5.3	9
CARDINAL	6.8	8.0	7.8	9.0	5.8	6.0	7.0	4.0	8.0	6.8	5.2	10
DESERT WIND	6.7	6.6	6.8	6.7	5.0	7.4	7.9	8.2	7.4	7.6	3.9	11
SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR	6.6	7.1	6.9	5.4	6.8	5.7	6.6	5.9	6.3	6.5	7.5	12
NIGHT OWL	6.5	6.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	7.0	7.0	5.5	9.0	7.0	7.5	13
ADIRONDACK	6.2	5.5	4.4	6.7	5.8	5.7	7.3	5.3	6.5	5.3	7.3	14
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS	6.0	6.8	6.0	6.3	5.5	6.8	6.3	5.5	6.0	6.5	5.2	15
PALMETTO	6.0	7.0	5.0	1.0	3.0	4.5	3.5	6.0	6.5	6.5	6.5	15
COAST STARLIGHT	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.4	5.7	4.6	5.1	6.6	7.2	6.2	6.6	17
SOUTHWEST LIMITED	5.7	6.5	6.0	4.8	5.8	4.5	5.2	6.7	5.5	6.0	7.2	18
SUNSET LIMITED	5.6	6.6	4.6	5.5	6.1	4.5	6.0	6.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	19
SILVER STAR	5.5	6.0	6.5	5.0	6.5	3.0	3.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.5	20
INTER-AMERICAN	4.6	6.1	3.7	4.0	3.0	6.3	4.9	5.9	5.1	4.1	3.1	21
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

The results of RTN's seventh Reader Train Rating Survey are given here. This survey covered the period of Apr 27-Oct 26, 1980. The results of our sixth survey were published in RTN 211 in Oct 1980. Altho these ratings are about three years old, we felt we should publish them before getting on with our next survey. Next issue we will publish a rating form to use for current trains, for the next survey which will cover Apr-Oct 1983. In a following issue we will publish the results from the Oct 27, 1980-Apr 26, 1981 survey. That will conclude the publication of the survey material we have on hand from earlier times. When the current survey is completed, after the end of next October, we will publish the results as soon as possible in RTN and will endeavor to maintain our surveys on a regular basis, as in the past.

Our results here are divided into long-distance and short-distance categories. The last column in each table gives the rank of each train within its group, ranked on the basis of category A, Overall Impression. While it is possible to rank the trains in many ways, we follow this practice for consistency. If a train does not appear in our table, it means we received too few ratings for it.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in this survey.

SHORT DISTANCE TRAINS	A. OVERALL RATING	B. OPERATING CREW	C. DINING CREW	D. LOUNGE CREW	E. FOOD QUALITY	F. CAR CONDITION (MECHANICAL)	G. CAR CLEANLINESS	H. TRACK CONDITION	I. SCHEDULING	J. STATION CONDITION	K. TYPE OF CARS (APPROPRIATE?)	RANK IN SURVEY
SAN DIEGAN	8.0	7.5	-	4.8	5.0	8.0	8.0	7.0	8.8	5.8	7.5	1
ILLINOIS ZEPHYR	7.7	7.3	8.0	6.3	3.3	8.3	8.3	3.7	7.7	8.0	5.7	2
LAKE CITIES	7.5	9.0	-	7.0	-	8.5	8.0	7.0	6.5	6.5	8.5	3
SAN JOAQUIN	7.5	7.5	4.5	8.0	6.0	8.5	7.5	8.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	3
WOLVERINE	7.5	9.0	6.0	6.0	4.5	8.5	8.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	8.5	3
NEC Amfleet	7.4	7.0	8.0	9.0	5.2	7.8	8.2	6.8	6.6	5.0	8.0	6
Empire Service trains	7.2	7.5	5.0	5.5	4.3	6.9	7.7	7.5	7.8	7.1	7.3	7
NORTH STAR	6.9	6.9	5.3	6.0	6.0	7.0	8.3	6.4	7.0	7.3	7.4	8
PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL	6.8	6.8	-	6.5	4.0	9.0	8.5	5.5	6.3	7.0	7.5	9
STATE HOUSE	6.3	5.3	7.0	-	5.5	7.0	7.3	5.7	6.3	6.0	7.3	10
SHENANDOAH	6.0	7.0	5.7	5.0	4.5	6.5	5.8	3.5	5.5	5.0	6.0	11
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
CANADIAN TRAINS												
CANADIAN	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.3	7.6	7.8	8.2	6.8	7.7	7.8	7.8	1
CAVALIER	7.6	6.7	-	5.0	5.0	8.7	9.0	8.3	9.0	8.0	8.0	2
SUPER CONTINENTAL	7.5	7.0	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.4	7.7	6.9	6.5	7.6	8.1	3
E&N Dayliner	5.5	8.5	-	-	-	7.0	7.0	6.5	6.0	3.5	8.0	4
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

Once again the Denver & Rio Grande Western's RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR has captured first place in an RTN reader train rating survey. It was the fourth consecutive survey in which the train ranked number one. In our first three surveys the RGZ's ranks were fourth, fourth and second respectively.

The RGZ's overall rating of 8.0 was the highest among all long distance trains. The short distance SAN DIEGANS also achieved an 8.0 overall rating, so to break the tie we averaged all ratings across categories. The RGZ's average rating was 7.8 and the SAN DIEGANS' was 7.0.

The highest-rated Amtrak long distance train was the LAKE SHORE LIMITED, which had just received newly-rebuilt Heritage Fleet cars at the time this survey was taken. (In survey no. 6 it ranked 5, up from 10 in the fifth survey; Heritage cars were just being phased in on the train during the sixth survey.) The EMPIRE BUILDER'S high rank of third was undoubtedly achieved by its recent changeover to new Superliner cars. The introduction of new or improved equipment obviously strengthens a train's image markedly.

The lowest-ranked long distance train was once again the INTER-AMERICAN, whose overall rating dropped from 5.3 in the previous survey to 4.6 in the present one.

The overall average rating given to Amtrak long distance trains was 6.9, the same as in the previous survey. That was an increase from the 6.3 of the fifth survey. Short distance trains were rated on Overall Impression an average of 7.2, higher than the 6.8 of the last survey and higher than the 7.1 of the fifth.

Amtrak Bill Passes Senate

The full Senate, by a vote of 85-5, approved a $10.86 billion Dept. of Transportation bill for fiscal 1984. The bill includes Amtrak funding in the amount of $716.4 million. The bill next goes to a joint House-Senate panel to iron out differences between the versions of the two houses. The House bill contains $720 million for Amtrak. The Senate version, which was supported by the White House, is actually somewhat lower than the total amount the Administration wanted, and is $450 million less than the House-approved bill.

In the Senate, reported NARP, Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop introduced an amendment which cut Amtrak's funding by $1.6 million, the amount Amtrak said it would save by switching trains 5 and 6 from the Wyoming line to the Colorado Rockies. Before his amendment passed, the bill had given Amtrak $718 million.

Other features of the Amtrak section, as summarized by NARP: The Senate bill contains the House bill's language regarding the Atlantic City line, but has a provision to facilitate commuter service to intermediate points on that line. Another provision directs Amtrak to proceed with the Manhattan West Side project within available funds, but disapproves of the House language which permits the diversion of Washington Union Station funds for that purpose. Another provision urges Amtrak to cooperate with Florida in initiating senior citizen rates on the SILVER PALM. Another provision urges Amtrak to consider without prejudice either 403-B or 404-G funding to establish a New Orleans-Mobile service before the 1984 World's Fair opens in New Orleans. The bill contains $100 million for the NE Corridor project, the same amount as in the House bill.

RAIL CANADA

FALL TRAVEL SEASON is in the minds of VIA Rail officials already, with an announcement that VIA is offering fully escorted tours from Winnipeg to British Columbia, the Maritimes and New England. The Fall Triangle Explorer tour to B.C. and the Rockies leaves Sep 19 & 26 for 13 days. The Fall Maritime Explorer tour leaves Sep 13 & 20 for 18 days east to Montreal, Halifax, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. The New England States Explorer tour to fall foliage leaves Sep 25 and Oct 2 on 16-day tours to Toronto, Niagara Falls, New York City, Boston, Stowe, Vermont, and Montreal. Full details are available from VIA or travel agents.

SOUTH EDMONTON-CALGARY trains 194 and 195 have been annulled since early May for track work, and were replaced by buses. Service was expected to be reinstated by early July.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY has been having very good business recently, in part due to the connections at Prince George from Jasper. On June 20 over 200 passengers were carried on the southbound train. The railway has upgraded its meal service, with salmon steak now served for dinner. Menus are as follows: breakfast--scrambled eggs, bacon, muffin, juice; lunch--chicken pot pie, vegetables, salad; dinner--salmon steak, potato, vegetable, pudding. Cost is $18 Canadian for all three meals.

VIA'S PREPAYMENT POLICY for meals on the CANADIAN is, according to a steward, to make use of the diner more efficient by eliminating no-shows. A passenger comments: if space is at such a premium, why do they still keep two tables out of service but reserved for crew during peak meal hours?

VIA'S CONCRETE MOVES to meet public needs were applauded by Transport 2000 in its May newsletter Transport Action. Such moves included: the decision to move back into downtown Quebec City; funding for an intermodal terminal in Sudubry; a new overnight train to the Gaspe with complete sleeping accommodations; and funds allocated to corridor improvements between Ottawa and Toronto. However, T-2000 pointed out, all these projects are located between Sudbury and Quebec. What of other parts of the Canadian nation? "Canadians living outside central Canada are served by a passenger rail network injured by 1981 cutbacks. Services between Winnipeg and Jasper, and Fredericton and Montreal have become fragmented. It should be no surprise then that a growing number of Canadians demand VIA's honouring its commitment to a NATIONAL system."

A NEW PRESIDENT for Transport 2000 Saskatchewan was elected on May 28. He is Don Abel, Mayor of Melville, and he has been VP of the organization since 1982.

COMMUNITY OF JASPER is still trying to get back its passenger rail service, discontinued in 1981 with the demise of the SUPER CONTINENTAL. Walter Urquhart, president of the Travel Industry Association of Alberta, quoted in Canadian Travel Press recently, estimated that the economy of Jasper lost from $6-9 million per year with the disappearance of the trains. Jasper does not expect to get back a train comparable to the SUPER CONTINENTAL, but would be happy with "any reasonable level of service." Most likely this would mean a part of the Winnipeg-Saskatoon-Edmonton-Vancouver service that the northern part of the prairie provinces needs.

NEWFOUNDLAND TRAINS and rail lines are in danger of abandonment. The Clarenville-Bonavista passenger train service and the line on which it operates, the Bonavista Subdivision of CN from Shoal Harbour to Bonavista were both subjects of abandonment petitions to the CTC, with hearings scheduled for late June. In addition, the rail passenger services between St. John's and Argentia and between St. John's and Carbonear had hearings scheduled for early July, as did a petition of CN to abandon the Argentia Subdivision from Placentia Junction to Argentia.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

THE CARLESS INDIVIDUAL in Los Angeles is at a distinct disadvantage, one concludes after reading Wall Street Journal reporter Jennifer Bingham Hull's front page article of July 18. She deliberately went around without a car in L.A. for one week, and reports in detail on the inconveniences that resulted. Her 40-minute commute to work takes 40 minutes by car, but 1½ hours by bus. People just aren't expected to arrive on foot at many L.A. locations. Some hotels have no sidewalks to their front doors; customers are expected to arrive by auto.

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC has agreed to a plan by a group of architects to operate passenger trains between UCLA and USC in Los Angeles for the Olympic Games next summer. The OLYMPIC EXPRESS would operate with six-car, 1100-passenger trains on a 10.8-mile single-track freight line owned by SP. The plan must clear other hurdles before it can achieve fruition, however. The Budd Co. reportedly said it would be willing to try out SPV-2000 units on the run. Otherwise, double-deck commuter cars obtained "from various sources" would be favored.

THE TRANSPORTATION BILL, in the version passed by the Senate July 15 (see also page 6), contains a reduced sum for the Los Angeles Wilshire Line subway--$110.4 million instead of the $127.5 passed by the House. The outcome of the joint House-Senate meeting is expected to be a compromise figure between the two sums. California Senator Pete Wilson said that he expected about $119 million in the final compromise version. He said he didn't know why the Senate subcommittee that set the amount had reduced L.A.'s alltoment and apparently given more to Atlanta. L.A. officials said that they can begin construction next June even if the amount is not as high as was first expected. Other California cities receiving money for new rail systems from the bill will be San Jose, $30 million for a light rail line; Sacramento, $20 million for an 18.3-mile light rail line to McClellan Air Force Base; and San Diego, $8.3 million for an eastward extension of the San Diego Trolley to El Cajon, Lemon Grove and La Mesa.

LOS ANGELES OFFICIALS in mid-July approved the addition of a Hollywood Bowl station to the planned subway, despite warnings that adding the $75 million station could derail the whole project. The station is projected to have the lowest patronage in the system--3800 yearly by the year 2000. However, the L.A. Philharmonic Association, manager of the Hollywood Bowl (which is open only a few months of each year), wielded heavy political influence and managed to push an approval thru the Rapid Transit District Board.

BALTIMORE'S AND MIAMI'S shares of subway cars on order from the Budd Co. are being re-arranged to give Baltimore fewer and Miami more to start with. Baltimore will start service with 56 cars, while Miami gets 40 cars.

NEW YORK CITY hired a consultant to study subway derailments which have recently been mounting. Consultant Harry M. Williamson, a retired SP executive, concluded that subway drivers were driving like "cowboys", speeding and stopping too quickly--an accusation that was soon denied. The MTA chairman said he agreed with the drivers that they were not speeding, and did agree with one consultant conclusion--that a number of trouble spots on the tracks are a problem. MTA began a program of track repair at 400 places, resulting in slow orders and delays on the system thruout the summer. Officials were reportedly unable to explain the large number of bad track locations on the rails which are inspected twice weekly. The worst problems are on the IND E and F lines and the West Side IRT 2 and 3 lines.

THE ATLANTA SYSTEM is using the first concrete box girder rail structures ever to be built in the U.S. as a means of speeding construction.

NEW YORK SENATE on Jul 12 gave approval to a bond issue to go before the voters in November, to raise $1.25 billion for transportation improvements. One billion of the total will be for road repairs, $170 million for mass transit, and $75 million for waterways and ports. Critics noted that the measure does not have a specific list of projects to be funded, however.

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT and SEPTA are offering a special, one-way fare between Philadelphia and New York, of only $9.90 to riders using SEPTA's Trenton regional rail line and connecting NJT trains. Tickets are not valid on Amtrak trains and must be purchased at SEPTA stations.

Spirit of Calif. to be Cut

The California Legislature on July 19 passed a $27 billion state budget for FY 84 which has already begun on July 1. The budget contains funding for the 403-b SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, but all sources believe that Gov. Deukmejian will line-item veto the budgeted funds for the train when he signs the bill on July 21. The train will continue running thru Sep 30, however. In spite of the fact that the train carries a $1 million Amtrak package express contract and that rail supporters have made great efforts to communicate their desires to retain the train, Deukmejian will cut its funding out, as part of at least $1 billion in cuts he intends to make from the budget. "Nothing I have heard gives any indication that he will not cut it," said one official. Insiders blame the Southern Pacific for the train's plight. At the time of Deukmejian's election, SP made large contributions to the Governor-elect, along with a letter outlining the cuts it wished made in the state's passenger rail program. The first of those cuts, the elimination of the Oxnard commuter trains, has already been made. The second, the destruction of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, is about to take place. The third, the dropping of funding for the SAN JOAQUINS (even tho most of their operation is on Santa Fe lines), will wait for next fiscal year. The SPIRIT will continue thru Sep 30 because the state was over-budgeted for it this year and has enough funds left for its operation thru the end of Amtrak's fiscal year.

If It's Daybreak, It Must Be Cadiz

by Miles Post

June 5, 1983--another uneventful Sunday evening that took a dramatic turn for the better when my telephone rang at 10:40pm. My friend, Dave Busse, called with the interesting information that the SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, would be detouring thru Parker tonight.

It seems that an unusually large snowpack in the San Jacinto Mountains of California and the resulting runoff undermined a bridge on SP's Los Angeles-Phoenix main line near West Palm Springs. The eastbound SUNSET would be handed over to the Santa Fe at Colton CA for a somewhat roundabout detour to Phoenix via Parker and Wickenburg, involving 252 miles of freight-only track. In addition, the westbound SUNSET that departed New Orleans June 4 would follow the same route.

After a quick consultation with my Amtrak timetable, I ascertained that No. 2 would be due out of Pomona at 11:15pm, a scant 35 minutes from then, and I live a good 20 miles from the Pomona depot. I decided to give it a try. I still had to stop at an automatic bank teller machine so I'd have some money to buy a ticket. As luck would have it, the first bank I stopped at had a bad-order machine. I then had to locate another bank with a working teller machine. The delay in stopping at the second bank caused me to arrive at the Pomona depot at 11:20pm, and I discovered that I'd missed the train.

All was not lost, however. I knew that there would be an unscheduled stop in Colton and some tricky maneuvering would be necessary to get the train onto Santa Fe's track. It requires a short backup move and the throwing of several manually-operated switches. The real problem now was trying to get to Colton in time to catch the train there.

SP allows 70mph for passenger trains between Pomona and Colton, which makes pursuit in a car a little difficult. I set what must have been a land speed record on Interstate 10, passing up the train at South Fontana. I quickly parked my car in a residential area adjacent to Colton Interlocking and positioned myself where I knew the last car of the train would stop while the switches were being thrown.

Just then, the train arrived and the interchange procedure went quickly, without a hitch. While the Santa Fe crew was boarding, I decided to make my move. I approached an SP trainmaster who was standing in the vestibule of the last car. "Excuse me, sir. Do you work for SP?" "Yes," was the reply. "I missed the train at Pomona and was wondering if I could get on here" I said. "Okay, get on."

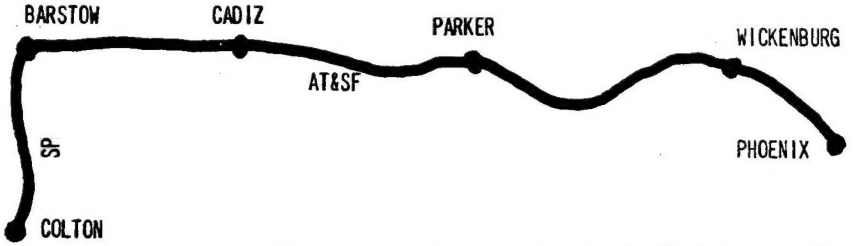
I made it! My efforts had paid off after all. The trainmaster reported my presence to the conductor, and I was instructed to go to the dining car and purchase a $66 one-way ticket Pomona-Phoenix. The conductor was a little upset that I didn't have a reservation and had boarded at Colton Yard rather than a designated passenger stop. I apologized and offered to make amends for the future. I hope the conductor realized just how important the Cadiz, Parker and Fourth Districts are to a seasoned, hard-core mileage buff. On second thought, maybe it's just as well that he was ignorant of the whole situation!

The trip from Colton to Barstow was uneventful. Most passengers were a little confused about the re-routing, and were understandably concerned about when they would reach their destinations. After about a 45-minute stop in Barstow for refueling, "Extra Amtrak 701 East" continued on toward Cadiz. Train 3, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, was passed near Ludlow, and about one hour was consumed at Amboy, where we got in the clear for a hot eastbound pig train. About another hour elapsed while we waited at Cadiz for our westbound counterpart, "Extra SP 8232 West", to clear the Cadiz District. The placement of an SP engine on the head end

of the westbound SUNSET seems to be a somewhat common practice in an effort to keep the train on schedule. I learned later that, in place of the transfer procedure at Colton, this train continued on Santa Fe tracks all the way to L.A.

Now it was our turn. With the sun coming up over the Old Woman Mountains, it looked as if the weather would cooperate during our trip over the old Arizona, California & Santa Fe, a line completed in 1910. The conductor signed the train register, the hand-thrown switches were realigned behind us, and off we went down 248 miles of track not found on Amtrak's systemwide map. This is unsignalled, train-order territory, but with the recent implementation of Track Warrant Control, the train crew members write their own train orders from information received directly from the dispatcher, either by radio or trackside telephone. Apparently, the train order-operator will soon be riding the caboose into oblivion.

At Rice, the 708 train (informally known as the Parker Local) was in the clear and waiting for us. Trains 708 (westbound) and 807 (eastbound) are the only regularly-scheduled freight trains operating between Barstow and Phoenix. In light of this, it was somewhat surprising to see the investment Santa Fe has put into this line. Continuous welded rail seems to be the rule rather than the exception. Near Vidal, we began the descent into the Colorado River Valley, eventually crossing the river on an impressive five-span bridge.



A brief stop was made at Parker to exchange our Los Angeles Division crew for one from the Albuquerque Division. The L.A. Division crew would be taken by crew wagon to Needles, where they would then work their way back to their point of origin. Our Albuquerque Division crew, after bringing the westbound SUNSET into Parker, was now ready to return to Phoenix with our train after several hours' rest. Interestingly, the SP crew stayed on the train, and after arriving in Phoenix, were sent to their turnaround point of Yuma, Arizona.

Between Utting and Salome, the line climbs up a mountainside thru a series of reverse curves and deep cuts. At Matthie, the Parker District merges with the Fourth District, which comes down from the main line in Northern Arizona. Shortly after passing Wickenburg, the train followed the Hassayampa River for several miles thru a wide, scenic canyon. Several speed restrictions begin near Ennis, and this means slow running along Grand Avenue thru the retirement community of Sun City. Motorists were surprised to see a passenger train snaking its way thru the northwestern suburbs of Phoenix, and with few grade crossings protected by gates, a few autos came close to becoming hood ornaments on our lead unit.

On the curve between Mobest and Phoenix, where the Santa Fe aligns itself with SP's Sunset Route, poor track condition caused the lead truck of engine 701 to derail. A track gang was called in, and by using a frog rerailer, this problem was taken care of rather quickly.

By this time, the train was so late that everyone was worried about what was going to happen at San Antonio and the connection with train 22, the EAGLE. I learned later that the Chicago cars were split off at El Paso and took the freight-only Texas & Pacific route to meet up with the EAGLE at Ft. Worth! Since I didn't know this was going to happen, I disembarked in Phoenix and flew back to Southern California on Republic Airlines flight 846, a DC-9-31. Next time I'll buy a ticket to Ft. Worth! Ya gotta get that stuff!

Across Louisiana on T&P/MP

by Duane W. Roller

On the evening of June 7, a barge struck the Atchafalaya River bridge at Berwick, Louisiana. The eastbound SUNSET LIMITED, already several hours late because of being re-routed via Parker due to flooding near Palm Springs, was forced to cross Louisiana on the KCS-MP-T&P from Beaumont, Texas and did not arrive New Orleans until nearly 3am. The next day I was scheduled to leave New Orleans on train 1, and thus had a chance to ride to Beaumont via the same routing.

Engines 702 and 709 were pulling cars 1223, 29913, 32063, 38019 and 39945, and departed on time at 1:55pm. We crossed the Mississippi River as usual, and then at the west end of the bridge at Westwego diverged onto T&P tracks after picking up a T&P pilot. This was the route once used by the LOUISIANA EAGLE. The track was good to excellent, but speed was limited to 50mph because of the foreign-line operation. We continued thru a number of small towns: Donaldsonville, White Castle, Plaquemine, before stopping at Addis at 4:22pm for a change of pilot. At all the towns a fair number of people turned out to see the rarity of a passenger train. At Livonia we curved around the junction onto the MP tracks; we were now on the route formerly used by MP New Orleans-Houston trains. Speed was still limited to 50mph, altho this track is excellent.

At Opelousas we stopped from 5:57pm to 6pm to allow a change of SP crew, which had been bused the 20 miles from Lafayette (altho passengers were forced to bus all the way to Beaumont). The scenery began to change from swamp to fields as we plodded along thru Eunice, Kinder, and Fulton. Then at DeQuincy came the only debacle of the day. Here the MP joins the KCS line from Shreveport once used by the Port Arthur section of the FLYING CROW. We stopped at 8:05pm to receive orders from the KCS operator, only to find that he had not bothered to prepare them.

The Land of All Lands to go to—
The way of all ways to go—

"SUNSET LIMITED"

At 8:18pm we were off again, only to stop 200 yards west of the depot and back up. It turned out that the orders were not prepared properly and had to be rewritten. Finally at 8:32pm we left, the train by this time surrounded by hordes of children, all too young to have seen the last regularly-scheduled passenger train thru DeQuincy. Altho we were only 47 miles from Beaumont, it took us an additional 105 minutes to get there; whether because of KCS active opposition to a passenger train or not is not known. Yet it seemed too much of a coincidence, given KCS opposition to a test train on its New Orleans-Baton Rouge line, that orders were not written, then written incorrectly, and freight trains began appearing out of nowhere and signals failed to turn green. It was sad, since KCS had kept its passenger service strong until very late and ordered new equipment as late as 1965.

Finally we arrived Beaumont at 10:17pm. Luckily, all roads shared one station, so there was no time-consuming transfer. The passengers were boarded and we were off on the right tracks at 10:22pm, 142 minutes late.

As an epilogue I might note the dramatic impact of the padded SUNSET schedule: leaving Beaumont 142mins late, we made up 40mins into Houston, and eventually arrived Los Angeles 39mins EARLY, after having lost and made up another 20mins in Arizona. Total nearly 3½ hours lost and made up.

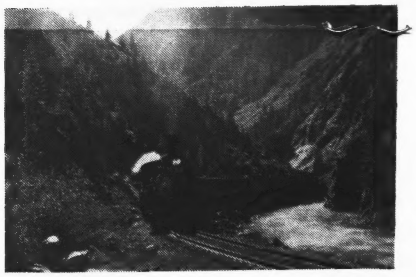
FULL COLOR
1984
CALENDARS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CALENDAR

14 SELECTED VIEWS OF MOUNTAIN RAILROADS

The majority of scenes contain historical color renditions of locomotives and rolling stock during the age of steam. Very little of this equipment exists today, which makes this calendar a valuable source of photographic information. Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow-gauge views and two standard-gauge scenes are included along with several Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad views of special occasions.

$6.00



DURANGO & SILVERTON
Narrow Gauge Railroad

14 SELECTED VIEWS OF THE ONLY PRIVATELY OWNED SCHEDULED YEAR ROUND - PASSENGER RUN IN THE UNITED STATES

Transparencies were chosen to illustrate special occasions and railroad excursions from Durango, Colorado, to Silverton, Colorado. This calendar includes scenes of the railroad run during snowstorms, autumn colors, and the unforgettable summer months beside the tumbling waters of the snow-fed Animas River.

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32 Stations on Amtrak Closure List

Soon after the close of this summer's heavy travel period, Amtrak will begin a deliberate effort to close many medium-sized stations located on long distance routes thruout the nation. This action follows the closure of a significant number of smaller stations during the past year, as part of a cost-cutting program.

On June 6 Amtrak circulated a memo containing a list of stations that for the past 12 months had averaged less than 10 ticket issuances per day. Said the memo, from Amtrak's E. N. Eden: "We believe Amtrak can no longer support this degree of activity with staffing and its associated costs. Acknowledging that there may be extenuating circumstances that require staffing/Amtrak representation at certain locations, we are asking for your review and comments (from other Amtrak officials--Ed.) prior to initiating any individual action relevant to unmanning. May we have your response no later than June 30, 1983."

The list of 32 stations that comprise the "hit list" is shown here. Critics feel that this approach is not completely justified. They argue: While the closure of some of these stations might be justified, in the majority of cases the reduction in station staffing will result in a significantly lower level of service to the public, with a concurrent negative impact on both ridership and revenues. In most cases, the net losses in revenue will more than offset the minimal savings which would be achieved by unmanning these stations.

This proposal for station closures seems calculated to remove adequate Amtrak staffing from large segments of many long distance routes, critics complain. If Amtrak is successful in closing the "hit-list" stations on the EAGLE route, for example, only the Little Rock station would remain open along the entire 705-mile segment between St. Louis and Dallas, and only Austin TX would remain open on the 285-mile segment between Ft. Worth and San Antonio.

AMTRAK'S HIT LIST

LOCATION	AVERAGE DAILY TICKET ISSUANCES Past 12 Months	Past 6 Months
Camden, SC	2.6	1.8
Canton, OH	5.5	6.5
Cut Bank, MT	2.8*	3
Deland, FL	6	6.6
Dodge City, KS	4.1	4
Edmonds, WA	6.7	9
Effingham, IL	5.5	6.1
Elyria, OH	3.7	3.5
Erie, PA	7.5	9.1
Hamlet, NC	8.5	9.6
Hammond, LA	5.5	4.3
Hastings, NE	5.4	5.6
Hutchinson, KS	4	3.3
Kissimmee, FL	3.5	3.6
Lamy, NM	4.8	4.3
Lima, OH	8	8
Longview, TX	7.7	5.3
Lynchburg, VA	8.1	9.3
McComb, MS	7.8	8.3
Montpelier Jct., VT	5.5	4.3
Niagara Falls, NY	8.5	9.1
Ottumwa, IA	7.3*	8.1
Prince, WV	6.3	6.1
St. Albans, VT	3.2	2.6
Sanford, FL	5.6	5
Shelby, MT	5.4**	5
Southern Pines, NC	6.9	8.3
Temple, TX	7.4	4.3
Texarkana, TX	3.5	2.6
Tri-State, KY	4.5	4.5
Waterbury, VT	2.4	2.1
Winslow, AZ	7.4	8.3

*8 months only; **9 months only.

ALL ABOARD AMTRAK

Here is a rundown of service provided by manned Amtrak stations:

1. CHECKED BAGGAGE SERVICE. For some passengers, checked baggage service is just a convenience of train travel. For the elderly, the handicapped, mothers traveling with small children, etc., the availability of checked baggage service is a necessity, without which travel by train becomes difficult or impossible.

2. ACCURATE TRAIN ARRIVAL INFORMATION. Close communication between local Amtrak agent and the operating railroad allows an accurate determination of train arrival time, particularly in cases of late trains which are making up time.

3. SPECIALIZED TICKET TRANSACTIONS. Manned Amtrak stations routinely handle prepaid ticket orders, where a ticket is paid for at a distant station but picked up at the local station. In addition, open stations can arrange refunds if travel plans change unexpectedly, or can reissue tickets for different travel dates or different accommodations.

4. PERSONALIZED ASSISTANCE. Elderly or handicapped travelers requiring special assistance are afforded this service at manned stations. All passengers benefit from a safer waiting room facility by having a ticket clerk on duty, particularly for nighttime train departures.

All of the above services would be lost by changing a station to unmanned status.

CLOSURE CRITERION

According to the Amtrak memo, the sole criterion which placed the 32 stations in jeopardy was their "average daily ticket issuance." On the surface, this arbitrary criterion seems reasonable, but additional investigation reveals that the statistic of "average daily ticket issuance" has no real relationship to either station revenues or the number of passengers handled per train.

The criterion does not distinguish between a station located on a route with daily service (14 trains/week) versus a station on a tri-weekly route (6 trains/week). It is hard for a station with only six trains per week to compete in volume of ticket sales with a station having 14 trains per week. The criterion also makes no differentiation between stations selling primarily long-distance (high revenue) tickets and those selling primarily short-distance (low revenue) tickets. Obviously, a lower quantity of long-distance ticket sales is required to achieve the same revenue that a large number of short-distance tickets would produce. Actually, the criterion even fails to address the actual number of passengers handled by station personnel at the threatened stations. In addition to passengers actually ticketed at their stations, agents also handle checked baggage, train status information, and boarding assistance for passengers who purchased tickets from travel agents, or by mail from one of Amtrak's four centralized reservations offices. Finally, the criterion fails to recognize different ticketing procedures which result in greatly differing counts for the same sales. At larger stations, a computerized ticket printer automatically prints all tickets, while at smaller stations the tickets are written manually. Failure to recognize this difference biases the results in favor of stations with ticket printers, and against many of the stations on the present list.

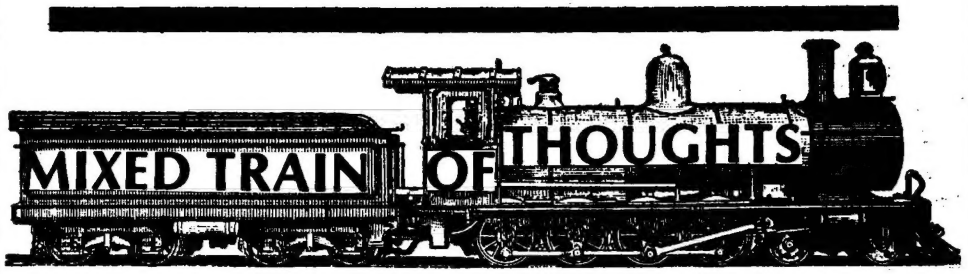
Local ticket agent sales at many stations are small compared with actual boarding figures because of policies followed by Amtrak's central reservations offices (CRO). The four CRO's handle all nationwide telephone inquiries made thru Amtrak's network of toll-free 800 numbers. CRO clerks push passengers to buy tickets by mail. Periodic contests are held among all four CRO's to determine which office can achieve the greatest mail order ticket sales; CRO clerks thus have no incentive to refer prospective passengers to the local ticket office to purchase tickets. If mail-out tickets are not possible, the passenger is instructed to obtain tickets from the nearest Amtrak authorized travel agency. Only rarely does the CRO agent mention that the ticket can be purchased at the local station, despite the fact that a direct purchase of this nature would save Amtrak the 10% commission which is paid on all travel agency sales. At some stations almost 50% of the passengers handled have purchased their tickets thru a travel agency. In most cases, the passengers were directed there by Amtrak's CRO clerks. With this policy, both station revenues and total station ticket sales are impacted negatively, and neither revenues nor ticket sales should be used to judge the value or amount of service that is being provided by local agents at a particular station.

Amtrak's criterion does not accurately identify non-productive stations, and this criterion should not be used to single out stations for closure. A more accurate assessment of station productivity would include: (1) count of passengers handled per train; (2) passenger-miles produced per average ticket; (3) average revenue produced per ticket; and (4) monthly revenue to labor cost ratio.

EXAMPLE OF TEXARKANA, AR

The inadequacies of the criterion become apparent when looking at the operations of the Texarkana, AR station as an example. According to Amtrak's monthly station statistics report (Form 297) for Texarkana, the average price for each ticket sold at this station is about $165. Thus the sale of just one "average" ticket each day more than covers the agent's entire salary, which is the main expense component eliminated if the station were closed. Altho Amtrak's average of 3.5 tickets per day is not a high volume, Texarkana does have a high revenue yeild per ticket. Most northbound passengers travel to Chicago or beyond, and the most common south/

(continued on page 20)



THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR made its switch from the UP line thru Wyoming to the D&RGW line thru the Colorado Rockies with the trains leaving Oakland and Chicago on July 15. Actual first operation thru the Rockies was on July 16 in both directions. On the morning of July 16 in Denver there was a christening ceremony for the newly re-routed train. Crowds also appeared at Granby, Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction and Rifle CO, and brief ceremonies were held at each of those stops. The first trains were crowded, Amtrak said. About 700 people were aboard the trains out of Denver on Saturday and Sunday the 16th and 17th, Amtrak reported. The first eastbound train was running two hours late because of continuing problems at the Great Salt Lake. The lake level is extremely high, and when winds arise, they readily knock out the SP line. The SP was knocked out in 21 places by 80mph winds the night of July 14. The UP was inundated, and the highway was closed. Amtrak detoured the trains on the WP around the southern end of the lake, on the 15th thru the 18th. On the night of the 14th and the morning of the 15th, when the trouble was beginning, Amtrak had to bus passengers between Elko NV and Ogden UT, and the westbound train at that time was six hours late. The first westbound train thru the Rockies was about 40 minutes late. On the last trips thru Wyoming, on Jul 15, the eastbound train was seven hours late, so the last westbound train was the one which saw citizen demonstrations protesting the change. At Evanston and Rawlins there were rail supporters with signs calling for Amtrak to remain in Wyoming. Amtrak said it looks as if the response to the new route is "exactly what we said it would be." The first trains were "just jammed." Amtrak said "twice as many people" were using the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR already.....

★ ★ ★

FRESH TROUT ITEM will be offered on the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR's menu between Denver and Salt Lake City, in keeping with the tradition of the Rio Grande.....

GRAND CANYON LINE of the Santa Fe, between Williams AZ and the Grand Canyon, has apparently been saved again temporarily, thanks to the efforts of the town of Williams, which would like to see steam excursions operated on the line. Supporters of such a plan are urged to write the Williams Chamber of Commerce on behalf of the effort.....

FORMER AMTRAK PRESIDENT Paul Reistrup addressed the Ohio Association of RR Passengers on July 16 at OARP's annual meeting in Columbus, on the occasion of the organization's tenth anniversary.....

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, a Bombay newspaper, reported on Jun 29 that the city's milk supply will soon be transported by train instead of by trucks, a change which will save the government of Maharashtra $700,000 per year in transportation costs. Maybe Amtrak should start hauling mile cars, comments a reader.....

COLORADO MIDLAND RAILWAY would need federal funding, as well as private and local support for its proposed passenger service across Wyoming, to fill in the void left by Amtrak's removal to Colorado. But Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop said that it was unlikely that the railway would get much federal funding except from the Small Business Administration. When Amtrak made its last runs across

Wyoming on July 15, it marked the end of over 115 years of passenger rail service on the historic route. At Rawlins, a mock train robbery was staged to dramatize the occasion.....

CITY OF MONTREAL'S plan to begin a high-speed, TGV- or Bullet Train-type rail service between New York and Montreal is moving forward. In mid-July, New York Governor Cuomo signed an agreement with officials from Quebec and Vermont to study the feasibility of such a service. The proposed route would follow the present Amtrak route to Albany, and then a newly-rebuilt route from there, with stops in Albany NY and Burlington VT. Construction of the line is estimated at $1.5 billion. Private funding would be sought for capital expenditures. Proposed trip time would be 3hours, 15minutes. The New York-Albany segment would be done in 1hr, 10mins. The project is the brain child of Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau, who first thought of it 13 years ago.....

A TRAIN HIJACKER disrupted the COAST STARLIGHT schedule on July 6. He boarded the northbound train at Davis and between Sacramento and Roseville drew a knife and demanded of an Amtrak attendant that the train be re-routed to Miami. The train halted at Roseville, where police boarded and after a half-hour delay talked the geographically-misguided suspect into accompanying them to the Placer County Jail. Train 14 was delayed 33 minutes by the incident.....

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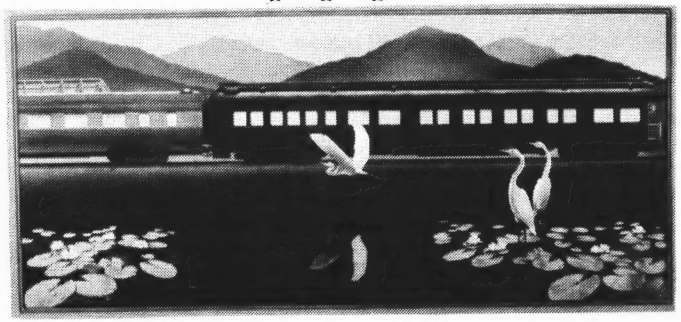

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL rail excursion brochure we've seen in recent years comes to us from the Railplex Corporation, advertising its Continental Rail tours with private cars on Amtrak, in northerly and southerly cross-continental trips. The cover painting from the brochure is shown above. Westbound tours are scheduled to leave New York Jul 9, 30, Aug 20, and Sep 10; eastbound leave San Francisco Jul 16, Aug 6, 27 and Sep 17. Southern Cross Continent tours depart westbound Sep 30 and Oct 21, while eastbound departures are from Los Angeles Oct 7 and 28. More info from Continental Rail, PO Box 4225, Grand Central Station, New York NY 10163.....

★ ★ ★

CATSKILL MOUNTAIN RAILROAD is one year old on Aug 9. The little line presently carries passengers between Mount Pleasant and Phoenicia NY. Riders go for the purpose of rafting in Esopus Creek. The gasoline-powered equipment is totally open-air, but the railroad plans on initiating steam runs in the future. In the fall, foliage trips will be offered between Shokan and Boiceville. The tracks used are from the former Ulster and Delaware Railroad, now owned by Ulster County and leased to CMR for $10,000 per year. The railroad was the subject of a writeup in the New York Times of July 17.....

TEXAS RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION CO., which spent $17.5 million on Rock Island right of way between Dallas and Houston, is pushing forward with plans to install a TGV high-speed service between the two cities. The Dallas-Houston run is planned to begin first. It will have stops at North Zulch (for College Station passengers) and Corsicana. Service is expected to start in 1988 with a trip time of 1½ to 2hrs.

After that, Auston-San Antonio is being looked at. Hal Cooper is the head of the transportation company behind the plan. He is a former civil engineering professor from the University of Texas. He hopes to start construction in 1985.....

AMTRAK DINING SERVICE seems to be improving again, now that more staff has been put on. Reader Rolland Graham, President of Mountain Outin' Tours in East Irvine CA, tells us that on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED that left Chicago Jun 15, meal reservations with fixed seating times were used. "The first seating was seated in one end of the Superliner diner. The next group to come in was seated at the other end, and so forth. In this way, ample fresh tables were available at all times, existing diners were under no pressure to vacate their tables, and the crew had plenty of time to clean and re-set before the next seating was called. The entire car was handled by an Attendant in Charge and one waiter (!). The attendant seated the incoming passengers and gave them sample menus enclosed in glassine envelopes to peruse. She then returned later to verbally take the customer's order. Food was delivered by the other attendant. Cash was collected at the end of the meal by the AIC, and either person was willing to add on a dessert after the meal if so requested by the customer. In spite of only two people working the entire car, there was no undue delay in either seating or service. In short, it was a real precision operation, which is somewhat exceptional in view of Amtrak's past track record".....

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THE SAN DIEGANS are not prospering as much as they should. Their revenue/cost ratios have fallen below 55% recently. The 55% level is an arbitrary figure dreamed up as a Caltrans guideline; but arbitrary or not, it's an important figure because trains with performances below it are in danger of being cut out of the state program. Elimination of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA will, among other things, hurt the SAN DIEGANS, because it will reduce their revenue by about 2%, the amount coming from transfer passengers from the SPIRIT. In addition, it will enlarge the SAN DIEGANS' share of Los Angeles terminal expenses. The SAN DIEGANS don't seem to be in any danger of being cut (the SP is not after them), but the SAN JOAQUINS are in trouble because their revenue/cost ratio is about 41%, about the same as last year. While ridership has risen, so have expenses. There is probably no way the figure can be improved this fiscal year. (Most short-distance Amtrak trains don't reach the 55% mark.) The best way to help the trains would be to extend them to L.A., but a state department that is already commited to cutting them out isn't going to go overboard in stimulating ridership for them. Look for efforts to eliminate the SAN JOAQUINS in the FY 85 state budget, as part of the ongoing Deukmejian-Southern Pacific effort to decimate California's rail passenger program.....

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THE ILLINI EXTENSION from Champaign to Decatur IL has been deemed not to be a commercial success, and funds to continue that leg of the train were eliminated from the Illinois state budget in an Assembly vote taken in early July. Decatur aims to try to get the money restored, but hopes are not high. The Decatur extension went into operation in 1981, and 50-60 daily passengers were needed to meet the minimum requirement for retaining service. During the Christmas holidays the daily average was 80, but at other times recently it was less than 40.....

RECOMMENDED SUMMER READING from current best-seller lists for some Amtrak officials: For Amtrak's Marketing Department, "Passengers"; for dining car service officials, "Heartburn"; for Graham Claytor, "The Man from St. Petersburg".....

STATE OF MICHIGAN would like to get a high-speed Bullet-type train service going, as would several other states. Congressman Sitz presented last month to Michigan ARP members a novel plan to facilitate such a service. He proposed that Michigan utilities sell bonds to raise money for construction of such a line. The sales of electricity to run the trains would repay the bonds. This plan might work, he felt, because Michigan utilities have a surplus of generating power. An obvious location for a high-speed line would be Detroit-Chicago. In other news, Michigan ARP is making special plans to support legislation proposed to allow the

state DOT to set passenger train speeds, overruling some small towns that now require Amtrak trains to creep slowly thru them for no good reason.....

AMERICAN TRAIN ROBBER Roy D'Autremont died in Salem OR on Jun 17 at the age of 83. His twin brother Ray still lives in a nursing home in Eugene OR. The two, along with third brother Hugh (who died in 1959) were convicted of blowing up an SP mail train in the Siskiyou Mountains in 1923. The gold they expected to find was not aboard the train.....

CALIFORNIA INTERCITY RAIL Services timetable put out by Caltrans will be re-issued shortly. The previous edition covered Oct 31, 1982-Apr 23, 1983. It should be available at Amtrak stations in the state.....

BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD is suing the state of Nebraska to make it drop its law requiring a manned caboose on all freight trains. The law is to take effect on Aug 26. In other BN news, the Wall Street Journal on Jul 20 published a lengthy character study of Richard M. Bressler, who is chairman, president and chief executive officer of BN Inc. The Journal takes special note of BN's recent takeover of El Paso natural gas co. Bressler was reportedly not interested in trains when he took over BN's reins, but now has become enamored of railroad traditions and has had an antique car remodeled for business lunches and dinners.....

★ ★ ★

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION Elizabeth Dole on June 30 announced proposed new rules to curb the use of alcohol and drugs in the railroad industry.....

ALASKA REPORT SERIES appeared recently in the New York Times. Amtrak Law editor Robert J. Swan reports is bit of misinformation on the disposal of the Alaska Railroad in the report of Jul 7: "The law was signed **this** Jan 14 rather than in December. The report has the state deciding whether or not to buy the railroad by Jul 14. But the law provides nine months after passage for the USRA to set the price. The report says the guesses range from $30 million to $427 million".....

MAGIC MOUNTAIN STOPOVER tour is now available via Amtrak and its SAN JOAQUINS and bus connection. Tour purchasers can lay over at Six Flags Magic Mountain theme park near Saugus, anew stop on the Amtrak bus route. Rate is $59.50 per person double occupancy, and includes one night at Valencia Ranch House.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING took place in Washington on July 20, but as we go to press no report is available on actions taken at the meeting.....

JAPANESE BULLET TRAINS are being protected from earthquake effects by a new communications satellite, the Sakura 2A, which began operating Jun 1. The satellite is capable of halting the trains when it receives a signal from a sensor along the Pacific coast that an earthquake has occurred in the ocean. The satellite passes a signal to a transformer substation which shuts off power to the trains in the area that will be affected by the quake.....

★ ★ ★

A GREYHOUND BUS was seen at the Picayune MS bus station on Jun 28 with a destination sign reading Bellingham. That should have been Birmingham.....

L.A.-SAN FRANCISCO transportation corridor has 110 airline flights EACH WAY daily. They're all "big" airline flights, using DC-9s or 737s or larger. And yet ironically one of the two daily trains between the two cities will be discontin ued soon!.....

WESTERN MARYLAND RAILWAY station at Hancock MD, built around 1903, was gutted by an apparent arson fire on May 28.....

AMTRAK'S GRAHAM CLAYTOR was the subject of a long article in the Philadelphia Inquirer of Jun 27. A photo caption calls Claytor "an avid collector of toy trains".

BOSTON ART WALK is a series of chalk reproductions of art works appearing this summer on sidewalks of the Boston Common. Among its sponsors is Amtrak, with a depiction of a locomotive. Over one million viewers are expected.....

NEW ORLEANS TELEVISION reported Jun 21 that a prostitution business was operating out of Amtrak passenger cars on track 11 or 12, with Amtrak employees involved..

 News in this issue is updated thru July 20, 1983.

IN SPITE OF OUR WARNINGS that subscribers should notify RTN when they move, we have a number of copies returned marked "moved, left no forwarding address" or "forwarding order expired." Don't rely on the postal service to forward your mail!

Carl Loucks

.... **SELLING RAILROAD TIMETABLES**

Employee Timetables, Public Timetables, Brochures, Guides, Postcards, Tickets, a full line of transportation paper items. New catalogue issued monthly. Send Stamped Self Addressed Envelope for latest list and specials.

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CARS & CONSISTS

*PALMETTO, train 89, Fayetteville NC Jul 9: engines 271, 275; cars 1165, 4645, 4606, 3111, 4612, 4615, 4718, 20045 Amcafe, 21833 & 21839 Amcoaches, 4004, 4009.

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, St. Paul Jul 3: engines 358, 366; cars 1214, 39918, 31040, 34025, 34018 ? (number uncertain; paint worn off), 38007, (cars from Portland:) 33014, 31015, 34008, 32046, (from Seattle:) 32047.

*NORTH STAR, train 9, St. Paul, Jul 3: engine 375; cars 34079, 34013, 31001, 34051.

The following cars were offered for sale by Amtrak on Apr 18, with a bid closing date of May 23:

Bag-dorm: 1514, 1533. 10-6 Sleepers: 2831, 2833. 11-DBR Sleeper: 2239 (accident damage, not fit for interchange). Slpr-lounges: 3201, 3203-6, 3208-10 (3204 not fit for interchange; 3205 accident damage). Slpr-lounge-Obs: 3260. Lounge Observations: 3331, 3333, 3334-6, 3343-4. Counter lounge: 3365. Coach Snack Bar Lounge: 3815-17. Snack Bar Coaches: 3901 (not fit for interchange), 3920-1 (3921 accident damage). Coaches: 4461-2, 5010 (fire damage). Diners 8003-4, 8011-15, 8018-25. Totals by manufacturer: Pullman Standard 54; Budd 46; American Car and Foundry 23; St. Louis Car 7; Pacific Car and Foundry 2. (Summary by D. Andre Christian.)

RAIL FANTRIPS

Aug 20: D&H Rail Excursion, Albany-Oneonta RT via Mechanicville, return via Albany main. 16th anniv of D&H. Amtrak equipt. Lunch by Brook's Famous Barbecue of Oneonta, $4. $37.50 RT. Mohawk & Hudson Chap, NRHS, Box 523, Schenectady NY 12301.

Sep 9-11: Visit San Francisco Historic Trolley Festival from So. Calif, SPIRIT OF CALIF with Superliners for tour group. Ride 3 charter trolleys, $30; train $74 up. Orange Empire Rwy Museum, Trolley Festival, Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516-2768.

Oct 1: GO-Transit bilevels Toronto-Gravenhurst, side trip to Huntsville. $37.95 by Aug 15. Upper Canada Railway Society, Box 505 Holland Landing LOG 1HO, Ontario Canada. ex-Rock Island power may be used.

Oct 1 Reading Rides Again, Reading-Pottsville PA; Oct 2 & 9, Reading-East Falls. Oct 10 ferry run Reading-Mauch Chunk. RTs $35 each, ferry run $33 one-way incl bus. Steam power. Hist. Soc. of Berks County, 940 Centre Ave, Reading PA 19601.

Oct 2: Philadelphia-Harrisburg-Reading-Phila Amtrak train; incl nearly 200mis CR freight-only lines, unusual routing. Flyer from: Philadelphia Chapter NRHS, Box 7302, Philadelphia PA 19101-7302.

Oct 28-30: 12th annual convention of Tourist Railway Association Inc, Twin Cities. Host: Minnesota Transportation Museum. Frank E. Sandberg Jr, Convention Chmn, T.R.A.I.N. "83", 3315 Skyview Dr, Burnsville MN 55337. Steam & elec excursions.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Amtrak's Chicago-San Francisco train, the California Zephyr, will begin operating on its new route through the Rockies on the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad on July 16. The first of the daily trains to cover this new route will depart Chicago and the west coast on July 15.

"Amtrak had planned to reroute the train between Denver and Salt Lake City on April 24, but massive mud slides near Thistle, Utah, blocked the D&RGW line, forcing Amtrak to postpone its plans..."

--From Amtrak press release, July 7.

(Also, wasn't there the matter of a little lawsuit?)

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"It normally travels at 165 mph, but has been known to go as fast as 380 mph. It can be booked up to two months in advance, or up to five minutes before departure. It is energy-efficient, and has been designed with the highest concern for safety and the environment. It's the TGV (Train Grande Vitesse), France's state-of-the-art high-speed transportation system..."

--TravelAge West magazine, May 23.

(Golly, imagine traveling 611 kilometers per hour!)

AMTRAK STATION CLOSURES (continued from page 14)

westbound destination is Los Angeles. Obviously, any criterion which does not include a factor for revenue is seriously flawed. A comparison of the 3.5 ticket-day average with the actual count of passengers handled at Texarkana reveals a large discrepancy. For example, during the fourth quarter of FY 82, Texarkana handled 1297 passengers. That number actually represents over 18 passengers per train. Many of these passengers had obtained their tickets from Amtrak's four CRO's by mail, from a travel agent, or were traveling on a round trip ticket (to Texarkana and return) purchased at their hometown Amtrak station. However, ALL of these passengers availed themselves of some or all of the services provided by the Texarkana agents--checking baggage, obtaining accurate train information, assistance with boarding, etc.

Texarkana does not have a computerized ticket printer. This fact is bad only when Texarkana's total of manually-written tickets is compared with another station's total of computer-printed tickets. On all trips which require more than one coupon (i.e., any trip extending beyond the endpoints of one route), Amtrak's 10 tickets/day criterion is automatically biased in favor of the stations having a ticket printer. For example, when Texarkana agents manually write a round trip ticket from Texarkana to Washington DC and return, the agent used ONE "book" ticket having four coupons--one for each route involved (Texarkana-Chicago, Chicago-Washington, Washington-Chicago, Chicago-Texarkana). On Texarkana's Form 297, this counts as one ticket sold. On the other hand, when Dallas uses a ticket printer to sell the identical reservation, the printer makes four separate card tickets. This transaction, using the ticket printer, is recorded as FOUR tickets sold on the Form 297 for Dallas.

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

Any rational consideration of station-closing proposals must also weigh the intangible benefits to Amtrak which accrue when a local station agent is maintained in small or medium-sized cities. These local employees are often the first and only contact between the public and Amtrak. Particularly along the route of the EAGLE where agents have elected to become more publicly visible, their promotion of Amtrak and passenger train travel has generated countless ticket sales, and their actions have greatly enhanced the public's awareness of Amtrak as a viable transportation mode.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK - VIA RAIL CANADA - EURAIL PASS - OCEAN LINER CRUISES - RAIL TOURS - RAIL EXCURSIONS - CHARTER RAIL CARS. Arrangements by phone or appointment - use your credit card - Tickets mailed promptly. A fully appointed travel agency with masters of ship and rail travel. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, 639 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

RAILROAD INFORMATION. 5-7 pages of NEW ENGLAND model railroad shows, railfan days, tourist railroad and rail excursion schedules. Send $3.00 for 4 issues (75¢ for sample issue) to RAILROAD INFORMATION, 77 Horne St., Dover NH 03820.

GLACIER RAIL HOLIDAY, five summer departure dates, fully escorted all-inclusive tours, using privately owned railroad cars. For additional information, contact Rio Vista Railways, PO Box 19992, Los Angeles, Calif. 90019. (213) 231-8442. Pay by check or credit card. Tickets sent to you by certified mail.

COLORADO PASSENGER TIMETABLES and folders of long ago, and many other passenger train items in our next Mail Auction. Catalog from Colorado Railroad Museum, PO Box 10, Golden, Colo. 80402. We are open the year around from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. just two miles from center of Golden, 15 miles west of Denver.

NORTHERN PACIFIC R.R. CENTENNIAL commemoration - Aug 25-28, Deer Lodge MT. Original 1880's Steam Locomotive in Operation. Re-enactments of 1883 Final Spike Ceremony. Displays, Exhibits, Pageant, Commem. Buckle & Coin. Write or call: Last Spike Centennial Committee, Box 149, Deer Lodge MT 59722. (406) 846-1004.

For sale: (1)Amtrak Employee News, mostly complete set March 75-March 81 ($20 postpaid). (2)Amtrak Annual Reports 1974, 75, 79 ($1 postpaid).(3)UP Operating Rules, Eastern & Southern-Central Districts & Idaho Division, July 1, 1954 ($20 postpaid).(4)Complete used year-sets of RTN 1976-1982 ($7 each postpaid). (5)Single issues of Trains, PTJ, Railfan Magazines (1970s) Write for list. Mark Johnston, 146 S. Michigan Av #206, Pasadena CA 91106.

Boston & Maine, Frisco and Pennsylvania uniform button blazer sets, 2 large, 6 small, $5.95 or all three $15.95. Joseph Lajoie, Box 3, Methuen MA 01844.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL, 1215 4th St, Sacramento CA 95814 is located NEAR THE AMTRAK STATION and the RAILROAD MUSEUM in "Old Sacramento". We handle VIA Rail Canada, Amtrak and all rail travel in Europe. For all your rail needs call (916) 446-1211. The rail experts.

TRANS SIBERIAN SPECIAL, LTD.---A journey across Siberia by private luxury train --from Moscow to Khabarovsk (35 miles from Chinese border). 20 nts departing August 30 & September 12, 1983. Details contact WORLD CLASS TRAVEL, 1216 Sycamore St., Cincinnati OHIO 45210. (513) 421-8000.

TROLLEY TRAILS THROUGH THE WEST: Volumes 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-West. Canada, 7-North. Calif., 8-South. Calif. $4 ea; #9-System maps plus text: San Diego, Minneapolis, Colo., more $8; #10-Council Bluffs IA, Yakima Interurban Trolley ride, early experiments leading to the trolley, vignettes of Duluth, Phoenix, San Jose, Portland's Banfield project, more $6. Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Bros, Box 712rtn, Yakima WA 98907.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

MAY 1983 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE (DECREASE) OVER 1982

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	MAY 1983	PERCENT CHANGE
METROLINERS	92,629	8.0
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	503,421	(1.0)
NEW ENGLAND METROS	5,985	.0
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	20,248	30.9
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	203,511	25.4
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	73,175	14.1
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	27,108	15.0
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	926,077	7.7
SHORT DISTANCE		
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	68,970	16.9
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	27,509	5.9
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	12,526	16.9
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	36,589	9.0
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	12,931	1.2
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,711	7.4
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	119,782	5.8
SEATTLE-PORTLAND	4,415	(9.5)
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	16,653	(13.3)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	20,447	19.8
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	6,028	21.4
CHICAGO-PORT HURON-TORONTO	10,974	19.0
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	6,730	(21.4)
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	21,759	7.1
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	5,000	1.0
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	15,995	15.3
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	7,277	5.4
PORTLAND-EUGENE		.0
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	8,372	18.1
MIAMI-TAMPA	5,388	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	413,056	9.4
LONG DISTANCE		
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	10,704	29.2
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	71,461	34.8
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	24,951	36.4
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK	8,129	23.6
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	34,435	29.5
CHICAGO-OAKLAND	33,828	34.6
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	24,728	18.8
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	18,859	22.6
CHICAGO-TEXAS	13,008	82.3
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	10,809	42.7
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	43,182	19.6
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	33,869	37.3
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	9,084	57.0
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	14,426	20.1
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHICAGO	14,662	12.5
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	29,564	30.6
LOS ANGELES-OGDEN-CHICAGO	12,589	28.5
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	408,288	30.5
SPECIAL TRAINS	15,362	55.2
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,762,783	13.0

Shown here are the latest Amtrak ridership figures, for May, 1983. The April figures were published in RTN #269.

The May results were the best that Amtrak has been able to report in quite some time, with an overall 13% increase over May 1982, and with all categories of trains showing increases. In March, overall ridership was up a higher amount, 15.3%, but nearly all of that was accounted for by commuters in the Philadelphia area who switched to Amtrak in the face of the SEPTA strike. That switch brought the NE Corridor patronage up to 27% above 1982 in March, but contributed little to Amtrak's revenues. In the present data, every train in the nation, with very few exceptions, was busier, and the increases were quite substantial. With long distance patronage up 30.5%, total revenues for the month must have increased by a substantial amount, even tho the ridership boost was undoubtedly stimulated by Amtrak's discount All Aboard America fares. The improving economy also must have helped business. (While March figures were up 15.3%, April was down 1.7%.)

The blank in the Portland-Eugene slot indicates the discontinuance of the WILLAMETTE VALLEY trains. The Miami-Tampa trains are too new to have a comparison figure from last year.

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